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ABSTRACT

This fact sheet describes the role of the transition specialist, an individual who plans, coordinates, delivers, and evaluates transition educational services at the school or system level, in conjunction with other educators, families, students, and representatives of community organizations. It summarizes the competencies for transition specialists beyond those of novice special educators. Knowledge and skill requirements are listed for the following categories: (1) philosophical, historical, and legal foundations of special education; (2) characteristics of learners; (3) assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation; (4) instructional content and practice; (5) planning and managing the teaching and learning environment; (6) managing student behavior and social interaction skills; (7) communication and collaborative partnerships; and (8) professionalism and ethical practices. (CR)

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DIVISION ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSITION

FOCUSING ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO ADULT LIFE FOR INDIVIDUALS OF ALL EXCEPTIONALITIES

TRANSITION SPECIALIST COMPETENCIES

FACT SHEET

MARCH 2000

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DIVISION ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSITION

DCDT

Focusing on Career Development and Transition from School to Adult Life
for Individuals of all Exceptionalities

Transition Specialist Competencies

Fact Sheet

The Council for Exceptional Children's Subcommittee on Knowledge and Skills, in concert with the University of Illinois' Transition-Related Competencies Project and the CEC Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT), identified and validated competencies for beginning Transition Specialists. We defined a Transition Specialist as

> *. . . an individual who plans, coordinates, delivers, and evaluates transition education and services at the school or system level, in conjunction with other educators, families, students, and representatives of community organizations.*

We based the Transition Specialist competencies on research on effective transition practices and organized them according to CEC's knowledge and skills standards. We assumed that Transition Specialists should possess the competencies of a beginning special educator and one other area of special education teaching specialization, but not necessarily hold certification as a special education teacher.

This Fact Sheet summarizes the competencies for Transition Specialists beyond those of novice special educators. For more information, refer to *What Every Special Educator Must Know: International Standards for the Preparation and Licensure of Special Educators* (CEC, 1998).

This Fact Sheet is a collaborative effort between the DCDT Research Committee and the Transition-Related Competencies Project. The Transition-Related Competencies Project was funded through the Office of Special Education Programs, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education (Grant #H029K40161). However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of these agencies and endorsement by the federal government should not be assumed.

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Knowledge and Skills of Beginning Transition Specialists

1. Philosophical, Historical, & Legal Foundations of Special Education

Knowledge of:

- Theoretical and applied models of transition.
- Transition-related legislation in fields of special and vocational education, rehabilitation, labor, and civil rights.
- Roles of federal, state, provincial, and local legislation and implications for providing transition services at the local levels.
- History of national transition initiatives.
- Research on student outcomes and effective transition practices.

2. Characteristics of Learners

Knowledge of:

- Implications of student characteristics with respect to post-school outcomes, environments, and support needs.
- School and post-school services available to specific populations of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

3. Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation

Knowledge of:

- Formal and informal career and vocational assessment approaches.
- Formal and informal approaches for identifying students' interests and preferences related to post-school goals and educational experiences.

Skills to:

- Match skills and interests of the student to skills and demands required by vocational or employment settings, community residential situation, and other community participation options.
- Interpret results of career and vocational assessment for individuals, families, and professionals.
- In collaboration with individuals with exceptional learning needs, families, and agencies, design, implement, and use program evaluation procedures to assess and improve the effectiveness of transition education and services, including evaluation of students' post-school outcomes.
- Use a variety of formal and informal career, transition, and vocational assessment procedures.

4. Instructional Content and Practice

Knowledge of:

- Job seeking and job retention skills identified by employers as essential for successful employment.
- Vocational education methods, models, and curricula.
- Range of post-school options within specific outcome areas.
- Transition planning strategies that facilitate information collection and input from appropriate participants.

Skills to:

- Identify a variety of outcomes and instructional options specific to the community for each post-school outcome area.
- Assist teachers to identify, in conjunction with the student, appropriate educational program planning team members.
- Evaluate students' educational program with respect to measurable post-school goals and alignment of those goals with instructional activities.
- Monitor student, family, and agency participation in transition planning and implementation.
- Demonstrate procedures to ensure the inclusion of specific transition-related goals in the educational program plan.
- Evaluate and modify transition goals on an ongoing basis.
- Use interests and preferences of the individual with exceptional learning needs to develop post-school goals and educational objectives.

5. Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment

Knowledge of:

- Methods for providing work-based and other community-based education for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- Methods for linking appropriate academic content to transition-related goals.

Skills to:

- Identify and facilitate appropriate modifications within work, residential, vocational training, and other community environments.
- Assess and develop natural support systems to facilitate transition to specific post-school environments.
- Develop residential, work-based, and other community-based educational programs for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

6. Managing Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills

Skills to:

- Demonstrate procedures for student involvement in the post-school transition process.

7. Communication and Collaborative Partnerships

Knowledge of:

- Methods and strategies for increasing families' knowledge and skills about transition-related issues and topics, including transition-focused educational program development.
- Procedures and requirements for referring students to community service agencies.
- Methods to increase collaborative transition service delivery through interagency agreements and collaborative funding.
- Strategies for involving individuals with exceptional learning needs in all levels of collaborative transition program planning and evaluation.

Skills to:

- Provide information to families about transition-related education and services, and post-school options in specific outcome areas.
- Systematically identify family service needs related to transition outcomes and assist families to connect with support networks.
- Involve individuals with exceptional learning needs, families, and community agencies in establishing transition-related policy.
- Assess and use student support systems to facilitate the post-school transition of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- Provide transition-focused technical assistance and professional development in collaboration with family members for educators, community agency personnel, and other relevant transition stakeholders.
- Collaborate with and participate in transition-focused interagency coordinating bodies.
- Develop coordinated interagency strategies to collect, share, and use student assessment data, with appropriate input and authorization of students and families.
- Use strategies for resolving differences that may arise in the implementation of interagency agreements or the provision of transition services for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- Identify future post-school service needs using transition planning documents in conjunction with relevant agencies.

8. Professionalism and Ethical Practices

Knowledge of:

- Scope and role of a Transition Specialist.
- Scope and role of agency personnel related to transition-focused education and services.

Skills to:

- Demonstrate positive regard for the capacity and operating constraints of community organizations involved in transition-focused education and services.

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